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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, May 24, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "AN EXCELLENT DRINK CALLED CHOCOLATE." Facts from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

What three words of the English language are most popular in the summer time? The answer: "Make mine chocolate."

That's what our Washington correspondent says, although she has no figures on which to base her answer.

"I am not a statistician," she states, "so I cannot tell you how deep an ocean you could make of all the chocolate ice cream sodas, sundaes, cake frostings and candies -- the latter to be melted down, to help float pleasure craft. A chocolate ocean would be a popular place. Especially for children. If their little boats capsized, on a bar -- a chocolate bar -- the ship-wreck victims would be only too happy to stay there forever -- or at least until the bar had disappeared.

"That is -- most of the victims would be happy. But if one of them happened to be connected with the Federal Food and Drug Administration, very likely he would set up his microscope, and examine every square inch of that chocolate bar, to see whether it were 'fit for human consumption.'

"For chocolate -- and all other products made from cocoa beans -- are rigidly inspected by the Food and Drug Administration. If you have a copy of the leaflet I've mentioned before, the leaflet which defines food products, and if you will turn to page 17, you will find definitions for eleven different products made from cocoa beans.

"First, the cocoa beans themselves are defined. They are 'the seeds of trees belonging to the genus Theobroma.' (Pronounced The-o-bro-ma) Next you'll find a definition for cocoa nibs, or cracked cocoa, which consists of roasted or dried cocoa beans, broken and freed from germ, and from shell or husk.

"The third definition is for cocoa butter; the next for chocolate, or plain chocolate, or bitter chocolate, whichever you choose to call 'the solid or plastic mass obtained by grinding cocoa nibs'.

"The fifth definition is for sweet chocolate, which is chocolate mixed with sugar and/or dextrose. Then comes milk chocolate, or sweet chocolate. Turn the page -- to page 18 -- and you'll find definitions for cocoa, for Breakfast cocoa, for sweet cocoa, for sweet milk cocoa, and for Dutch-process chocolate.



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"Eleven definitions in all, for the eleven different kinds of cocoa products inspected by the Federal Food and Drug Administration. A copy of this leaflet, by the way, is yours for the asking. The title is 'DEFINITIONS AND STANDARDS FOR FOOD PRODUCTS FOR USE IN ENFORCING THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.' And the number, SERVICE AND REGULATORY ANNOUNCEMENTS, Food and Drug Number Two.

"Now -- more facts for the homemaker who wants to know the whence-come and how-much of the food she buys. Last year we imported 606 million pounds of cocoa beans. They came from British West Africa, from Brazil, from the Dominican Republic, the British West Indies, French Africa, and from other countries.

"According to Mr. Campbell, Chief of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, 'only a very small percent of the cocoa beans imported were refused entry because of the presence of moldy and unfit beans.'"

Now, still quoting our correspondent: "I hope you remember," she says, "that the botanical name of the cocoa-tree is Theobroma. That means food of the gods. The Indians of Mexico have a tradition that the cocoa-tree was one of the few growing in the Garden of Eden.

"Cortez, in 1529, introduced the wonders of the chocolate beverage into European countries. In 1657 -- am I going too fast for you? -- well, let's make it 280 years ago, chocolate was a new drink in London. For in that year, this announcement appeared in the 'Publick Adviser' of that city:

"'In Bishopgate Street, In Queen's Head Alley, at a Frenchman's house, is an excellent West India drink called chocolate, to be sold, where you may have it ready at any time, and also unmade at reasonable rates.'

"But there seems to have been some opposition to this 'excellent drink called chocolate,' in the British Isles, for we find this item in 'The Spectator,' under the date of 1712: 'I shall also advise my fair readers to be in a particular manner careful how they meddle with romances, chocolate, novels, and the like inflamers, which I look upon as very dangerous to make use of during this carnival (that of the month of May).'

Now, quoting our correspondent: "I shall advise my fair listeners," she writes, "that I do not care how they meddle with romances, novels, and like inflamers, even in the month of May, if they will remember that the Federal Food and Drug Administration maintains rigid port inspections of all cocoa beans, to see that the beans are not wormy, moldy, or otherwise unfit for entry.

"Inspection does not stop at the ports. Government officials see that the various chocolate products made from the beans are honestly labeled when entering into interstate commerce.

"And all chocolate candy, in package form -- all candies of all kinds in package form -- are labeled with the true net weight. So -- read the label, if you want to know how much candy, chocolate or otherwise, you are getting for your money."

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